Aboriginal AWARENESS Workshop

Alberta Region Module

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This document is not intended to be the definitive historical or cultural account of events, but rather to provide some background information. The research and writing were undertaken by an Aboriginal contractor on behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the interpretation of events and views expressed herein should not be regarded as necessarily those of the department. Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, currency and reliability of the content, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada accepts no responsibility in that regard.

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List of acronyms

DIAND: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

FNII: First Nations Infrastructure Initiative

FTA: Financial Transfer Arrangement

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Before *You* Start...

This regional module will provide participants and the facilitator with insight into the general issues facing Aboriginal peoples in Alberta. It should be presented by speakers from the host community or region; however, this text can be used to present the unit if speakers are unavailable.

Some of the information highlighted in the Current Activity section was taken from materials available at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's (DIAND) Information Kiosk. Speakers may find it useful to address how some of the initiatives described in this section are developing in the host community.

This module is one of nine, each one corresponding to a different region: the Atlantic, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, the Northwest Territorie and Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec, Yukon, and Saskatchewan.

They believed the land, like the air they breathed, couldn't belong to an individual; nor could it be bought, sold, mortgaged or used for speculation.

Statistical Overview of Aboriginal Peoples in Alberta

- 46 First Nations
- 80,390 Status Indians
- 56,310 Métis people
- 163,980 Non-Status Indians

General Overview

This module introduces participants to the Aboriginal peoples of Alberta, and suggests topics and issues for discussion. Keep in mind, this is only a brief summary of key issues.

Historical Background

Aboriginal people have lived in the Prairie provinces for a long time—perhaps from as early as 6000 BC. In the Old Crow area of the northern Yukon Territory, the remnants of a human encampment, which could be up to 150,000 years old, have been discovered.

The British called the Prairie region "the Northwest." Here, different Aboriginal cultures evolved, based on the natural resources at hand. In the south, the buffalo hunt was the centre of Aboriginal culture (although they were also farmers); in the north, a way of life shaped itself around the hunt for the caribou.

Aboriginal cultures differed in many ways. The Cree, for example, were great travellers, using the birchbark canoe to expand their physical horizons. The Blackfoot were Plains warriors who followed the buffalo. That said, there were also similarities. Before the Europeans came, all Northwest people were nomadic hunters-gatherers, believed that men must test their courage in battle, and thought of the earth as their mother and the animals as their kin. Their history was based on oral tradition; there were no written languages.

At the time of the first European contact in the 17th century, five prominent cultural groups existed in the Northwest: (roughly from east to west) the Saulteaux (or Ojibway), the Cree, the Assiniboine, the Blackfoot and, to the north, the Chipewyan (often called the Dene).

In 1670, Charles II of England granted to the Hudson's Bay Company "ownership of all lands whose waters drain into the Hudson Bay." This area was known as Rupert's Land and included all of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan and the northern half of Alberta, as well as much of northern Ontario and Quebec.

The First Nations living there didn't object to the charter—they didn't even know it existed. As long as the Europeans only attempted to establish isolated fur trading posts, the First Nations could continue to use their

traditional territory, and that was what they wanted. They began to trade with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, but their culture remained relatively unchanged until settlers began to farm along the Red River in the 19th century.

The idea of permanently farming a piece of land was foreign to First Nations. Legal ownership was also alien to them. They believed the land, like the air they breathed, couldn't belong to an individual; nor could it be bought, sold, mortgaged or used for speculation. Land could be used by people, but it was the Creator's gift.

The First Nations of Alberta and Euro-Canadian Settlement

The westward expansion of the Canadian agricultural frontier in the second half of the 19th century was disastrous for Alberta First Nations. Through the fur trade, the Aboriginal peoples of the region had been drawn into the colonial economic system as willing and indispensable partners. But this era of economic and social partnership came to a swift end with the southern collapse of the fur trade, the disappearance of the great buffalo herds and the mass arrival of agricultural settlers from the east. Suddenly, First Nations were economically redundant; they were quickly reduced to a position of weakness and poverty.

The doctrine of "progress" made the settlement and agrarian transformation of the Prairies appear to Euro-Canadians as both inevitable and good. By the 1860s, the invention of the repeating rifle and the coming of the American transcontinental railways quickly led to the decimation of the great buffalo herds. The buffalo had been the economic basis of Plains Nations, and their disappearance destroyed the old Aboriginal economies.

For First Nations, the decade of 1865-1875 brought an end to their traditional way of life. Thousands died from smallpox. Whisky traders moved north, with devastating results. The buffalo were virtually wiped out. And settlers started streaming in.

By 1812 a "new nation," composed of the Métis offspring of Europeans and Aboriginal people, had sprung up and was a dominant force in the fur trade community. Although Lord Selkirk had negotiated a treaty with some of the Ojibway in the area, his colonial administrators alienated Métis people by legislating restrictions on their trade practices.

The new Canadian government opted to negotiate treaties extinguishing Aboriginal title to land before mass immigration and settlement in the West.

In 1816, a convoy of Métis people transporting a shipment of pemmican was confronted by the colony's governor and a group of settlers armed with rifles and a cannon. In what's now called the Battle of Seven Oaks, one Métis person and 21 settlers, including the governor, were killed. In a subsequent treaty, European settlers were forced to leave the region temporarily.

This turned out to be little more than a slowdown to settlement in the West. In 1869, the British, the recently formed Canadian government and the Hudson's Bay Company talked about transferring the Northwest Company lands to the Canadian government. Government surveyors were sent to Red River. Métis people were not consulted, though they made up the majority in the Red River settlement.

Under the leadership of Louis Riel, they took over Fort Garry and, from this position of strength, formed a provisional government to negotiate with Ottawa. Riel's government fought for linguistic, religious, educational and land rights, which were all included in the *Manitoba Act* of 1870. The Act created a small, self-governing province and a vast unit called the Northwest Territories, administered by Ottawa. Prime Minister John A. MacDonald granted Métis people security of tenure on occupied lands and reserved 566,580 hectares for their unmarried children. The Canadian government then sent in troops, and Riel fled into exile.

Métis people soon lost most of their land grant to speculators. Others, who held river lots, found it impossible to get clear title because of their semi-nomadic way of life. They followed the buffalo west, and established camps in what became Saskatchewan and Alberta. Their claims for land rights along the South Saskatchewan River were rejected by the government.

Frustrated, Métis people turned again to Louis Riel, who was by now teaching school in Montana. In 1885, Riel led the last armed resistance against the Canadian government. They were defeated at Batoche, Saskatchewan. Riel and 10 Aboriginal leaders were hanged, and many Métis people went north and west to gather in villages in what is now northern Alberta.

The Treaty Process in Alberta

Ottawa was not alone in fearing invasion and annexation from the south. Given the hard choice between domination by the American Republic or by British North America (in the form of the new Canadian state), Alberta First Nations picked Canada. Ottawa was the lesser of two evils.

The new Canadian government opted to negotiate treaties extinguishing Aboriginal title to land before mass immigration and settlement in the West. Ottawa recognized the need for treaty negotiation and peaceful settlement. First, it complied with British policy initiated with the Royal Proclamation of

1763; second, as the Riel Rebellions had shown, negotiation and legal settlement were cheap compared to military action in a distant and still relatively inaccessible portion of the country. The American government could afford to send in the troops to solve the "Indian problem;" Ottawa couldn't.

The Canadian desire to negotiate treaties, and a peaceful and orderly settlement of the West, seemed preferable to the lawless chaos of the American frontier. And by the 1870s, most First Nations were suffering great economic hardship and increasing social disruption. Their traditions had been undermined economically; they wanted, and desperately needed, positive and constructive change.

Aboriginal Peoples in Alberta Today

Today, the Saulteaux live in central and southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as western Ontario; the Assiniboine in Saskatchewan and Alberta; the Blackfoot (and their confederacy of Piegan and Blood tribes) only in Alberta; the Cree and Chipewayan in all three provinces, with the Chipewyan in the northern parts.

Many Dakota-Sioux came to Canada in 1876 as refugees after their wars with the American cavalry. Reserve lands were set aside for them in the southern Prairies, but they didn't sign treaties.

Although they have traditionally lived in rural and remote areas, the Aboriginal people in the Prairies show a strong trend of migrating to cities—DIAND estimates that about one third of Status Indians now live outside First Nation communities (reserves), mostly in urban areas.

Both the growth in the Aboriginal population and the migration to urban centres are matters of concern to social analysts, mainly because Aboriginal people experience severe social problems which lead to them making this move. But the statistics of life on First Nation communities paint a horrific picture:

- more than 60 percent of homes on reserves lack indoor plumbing;
- the fire death rate is six times the national average;
- the number of Aboriginal suicides is three times the national average;
- Aboriginal unemployment ranges from 35 to 75 percent, and in some First Nation communities is a fact of life for almost everyone;
- only 20 percent of Status Indians complete Grade 12; and
- 44 percent of Aboriginal children are in the care of child welfare agencies.

Discouraging as such statistics are, Aboriginal people want to maintain a proud heritage and a separate identity. They don't—and won't—forget that they are the original inhabitants of Canada; nor will they let others forget.

Chiefs and First Nation Councils

For Status Indians, the smallest political unit is the band, or First Nation. Each band elects councillors and a Chief.

Band councils were introduced by the *Indian Act*. The council's powers are limited and can't be exercised without majority agreement.

The usual term of a Chief and council is two years. This changes only if a Chief or councillor is convicted of an offence, dies, resigns or becomes, in some way, ineligible to hold office. If this vacancy occurs more than three months before an election date, a special election is called.

Traditional Chiefs and Band Councils

With a traditional band council, elections are called when a specified majority decides it's time. Terms are determined by custom. Elders play an important role in the community. Chosen because of their age, family or knowledge, their teachings of life are valued. Elders are usually called upon when decision makers need guidance and wise counsel; they are sometimes asked to mediate conflicts.

Aboriginal peoples are indigenous to this continent, while other Canadians are immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

Regional Concerns

Land Claims: Background

Aboriginal organizations in the West are seeking compensation for the land they lost when the Northwest Company came under Canadian government jurisdiction. The government of that time, having signed treaties with Aboriginal people, considered all Aboriginal rights extinguished and the matter closed. This hasn't been the case; land claims are still a lively issue and will likely remain so in the years to come.

In 1871, the first treaty signed in the Northwest was with First Nations in southern Manitoba. The government insisted that the size of the First Nation communities be set at 12.95 hectares per person; earlier treaties had offered four times as much. Later, a few First Nations did sign treaties giving them 51.80 hectares per person. This was the standard used for subsequent treaties, except for Treaty No. 5, which reverted to the smaller number.

Claims Related to Treaty

As it happened, First Nations often didn't get as much land as they were entitled to, and what they did get was of poor quality.

In calculating the formula, the government based its population figures on the number of Aboriginal people who had received the previous annual treaty payment (lands were not reserved immediately after treaties were signed). Those who were sick, hunting or working for the Hudson's Bay Company and couldn't be there at the time of the treaty payment, weren't counted.

In other cases, Aboriginal people who signed treaties in later years were added to the membership of existing bands; but no land was added. Sometimes, land was promised, but never delivered, as with the Fort Chipewyan Nation in northern Alberta, who recently reached a settlement with the provincial and federal governments giving them $26 million and 5,000 hectares of land.

Aboriginal organizations today argue that First Nations and the government each had a different understanding of the kind of transaction taking place when the treaties were signed. Aboriginal people had never measured land in hectares or acres, and weren't clear on the size of the area being reserved for them. They also couldn't foresee the massive migration of settlers that was to come; they didn't think they were completely and absolutely giving up their traditional lands, their intent was to give White people permission to use it.

Treaties in the Prairie Region

Between 1871 and 1921, the Government of Canada negotiated 11 treaties with First Nations in the northern and western parts of the country. These are the "numbered treaties" and apply to most Status Indians in the Prairie provinces, and some in Ontario and the Northwest Territories.

These treaties guaranteed First Nations certain rights in perpetuity in exchange for their land. But they turned out to be more open to interpretation than the government had anticipated. Their meaning is being hotly debated today, particularly in the area of land rights and Aboriginal self-government.

The numbered treaties contain the same basic provisions: in exchange for surrendering their right and title to their lands, Aboriginal people were to receive money in perpetuity and reserves of land for their own use. Treaties Nos. 1-7, which were contracted to open up the West for settlement, gave First Nations tools, livestock and seed grain. Treaties Nos. 3-11 included a guarantee of hunting and fishing rights. Treaty No. 6 included a "medicine chest" clause.

First Nations entered into these treaties at a difficult time. The source of their culture, the buffalo, was disappearing from the Plain; the fur trade was in decline; epidemics of diseases introduced by Europeans had killed and weakened many. The Canadian government had demonstrated its military power by sending troops to Fort Garry in 1870, and a large influx of settlers seemed imminent.

They had little choice but to agree to the treaties and not much to bargain with except for an appeal for justice. The government declared its intention to deal with them justly, but was anxious to make a formal arrangement before widespread surveys or settlement took place. Agents had reported that a failure to do so might well result in isolated, perhaps organized, attacks on settlers by First Nations.

Treaty signing was a public event, with attendant pomp and ceremony. The government treaty commissioners were, in general, inflexible, trying to make as few concessions as possible and keep terms uniform.

The government had to concede more than it would have liked at times but ultimately held the upper hand. Often, verbal promises were made at a treaty signing. Some were eventually incorporated into the written terms; others haven't been fulfilled to this day. Remember, to First Nations, a verbal promise had just as much force as a written one.

In Alberta, Aboriginal people signed "numbered treaties" with the federal government. Those affecting Alberta are:

Treaty No. 6	(1876)—Central Alberta and Southern and mid-Saskatchewan
Treaty No. 7	(1877)—Southern Alberta
Treaty No. 8	(1899)—Nothern Alberta, Northern Saskatchewan, Northeastern British Columbia and the Northwest Territories
Treaty No. 10	(1906)—Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan (1908)—Northern Manitoba.

Federal Claims Policy

In 1973, the federal government announced a policy that recognized the Aboriginal right to file land claims. This included specific claims resulting from unfulfilled treaty obligations and comprehensive claims made by groups not under treaty. Unfortunately, the specific claims policy applied only to Status Indians belonging to a First Nation, and the comprehensive claims policy applied only to territory north of the 60th parallel and part of British Columbia. What this did was exclude Métis people and Non-Status Indians.

An Office of Native Claims was established within DIAND in 1974. It was to conduct research, represent the government in claims negotiations with Aboriginal groups and formulate related policies. Aboriginal organizations were funded to conduct their own land claims research.

Specific claims for unfulfilled treaty land entitlements were soon filed. The main point of contention was whether to use population figures at the time of the original surveys, or those of the present day, to determine the amount of land Aboriginal groups were entitled to.

First Nations argued that acreage must be calculated on current populations to compensate for losses suffered because they hadn't been able to use it for many years. Provincial governments have disagreed—except for Saskatchewan, which, in 1976, agreed to use current figures.

The amount of land at stake is substantial if you use today's population figures in the formula. First Nations, hoping to alleviate the depressing social conditions which exist in many First Nation communities, want valuable land. But, right now, the kind of land they want is used for mining, forestry, generating hydro-electric power and farming. Aboriginal organizations have agreed that if sufficient unoccupied Crown land of good value is unavailable near existing First Nations communities, they'll take land elsewhere, or money.

The Lubicon Claim

Undoubtedly the most famous of recent land claim struggles in the West is the ongoing battle of the 478-member Lubicon Nation. This Cree community maintains that it has been left out of the treaty process and that it still retains, as a consequence, title to 246 square kilometres (95 square miles) of territory around the town of Little Buffalo, northwest of Edmonton.

The Lubicon troubles are rooted in a historical oversight. Somehow, when federal government agents toured northern Alberta to identify First Nations and establish First Nation communities in 1899, they overlooked a tiny hamlet on the shores of Lubicon Lake. No treaty with the Lubicon was ever signed. In fact, it wasn't until 1939 that the first non-Aboriginal person visited the community.

In 1940, attempts to establish a First Nation community were set aside as Ottawa geared up its war effort. After the war, efforts were revived and abandoned periodically. It wasn't until the mid-70s, when oil and gas reserves were found in the area, that serious efforts to reach a settlement were revived.

Since 1980, however, the Lubicon Nation and Ottawa have been deadlocked in a dispute over how much land the First Nation is entitled to. Based on treaty rights that cover most First Nations living close by, the Lubicon say they qualify for 52 hectares (128 acres) per member—more than 246 square kilometres. The First Nation also wants compensation for oil taken from wells drilled on its lands since 1976, and future oil revenues from wells located on their traditional hunting grounds.

Successive federal and provincial governments have challenged the Lubicon claim. They question the status of many individuals the Lubicon Nation includes on its membership list. Non-Aboriginal residents of the area also doubt the list's legitimacy. They say at least half are Métis people, while others moved to the area from other First Nation communities as late as the 1960s.

Since provincially sanctioned oil and gas development began in the Little Buffalo area, the Lubicon traditions of hunting and trapping have died. Poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and disease are prevalent. By 1983, 95 percent of the people were on welfare in a community that had been almost self-sufficient less than a decade before.

Lubicon protests, initiated in 1987, reached a crisis point in 1988. Supported by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations across the nation, the Lubicon set up a blockade of 246 square kilometres of territory near Little Buffalo. After a standoff that lasted a few days, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) struck suddenly and with force, arresting 27 protesters—

including a 67-year-old Quaker grandmother from Halifax. The publicity embarrassed, and pressured, Ottawa and Edmonton.

Within hours, Alberta Premier Don Getty and Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak initiated negotiations. After 40 years of fruitless talks, it took six hours to reach an agreement. The deal gave the Lubicon Nation the 246 square kilometres it wanted, but didn't provide for financial compensation for future oil revenues from its hunting grounds.

Time to involve Ottawa. But despite initial optimism, the federal government wouldn't bend on the contentious issue of the Lubicon population. The issue remains unresolved.

The Métis Claim

In the *Manitoba Act* of 1870, the federal government recognized the Métis land title claim by setting aside 566,580 hectares as a land bank for present and future needs. After the Riel Rebellion of 1885, additional land grants and sometimes scrip (which gave the right to lay claim on certain areas of unoccupied Crown land) were given to Métis people of the Northwest. The government thought this extinguished Métis rights to land.

The *Constitution Act*, 1982, recognizes and confirms Aboriginal rights and goes on to specify that this includes Indian, Inuit and Métis people. Métis people take this to mean that they have legitimate comprehensive land claims. In Manitoba, they want to regain the land granted them in the *Manitoba Act* of 1870 (they lost most of it to speculators). But they concede that since this land is now owned by others, they can't get it back. Instead, they want compensation based on the needs of individual Métis communities.

Because First Nations have signed treaties, they were recognized—and should be recognized today—as sovereign nations.

The Alberta Métis Settlements

In 1989, the Alberta government agreed to settle the first Métis land claim in Canada. Then, in 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Manitoba Métis Federation had the right to pursue its comprehensive land claim against the federal and provincial governments in the courts. Métis settlements in Alberta were established by the provincial government 50 years ago. Under the *Métis Betterment Act*, Alberta's minister of Municipal Affairs has authority over the settlements. This means a Cabinet order can officially erase these settlements. Over the years, four have been closed down.

Although the 50-year-old Act remains in force, the government has agreed to give up control of the settlements. Local Métis councils control municipal affairs, although they don't have the ultimate right to govern.

Treaty Issues/Benefits

Status Indians, whether under treaty or not, are accorded benefits under the *Indian Act*. Some, such as tax exemption, don't apply to those who live outside First Nation communities. Others, such as free education and medical care, have since been extended to all Canadians, and so have lost their original significance.

Apart from land claims, there are three main treaty issues that Aboriginal organizations and government are trying to resolve:

- hunting, trapping and fishing rights;
- levels of funding for First Nation programs; and
- Aboriginal self-government.

Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Rights

Treaties stipulate that First Nations can hunt, trap and fish on unoccupied Crown lands. But federal laws that regulate fish and wildlife also apply to Aboriginal people. First Nations claim these laws violate treaty promises because they restrict Aboriginal access to hunting and fishing. An example is the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*. First Nations have applied to the courts for an exemption several times, without success.

Funding Levels

Treaties don't specify the level of funding the government owes First Nations. In many First Nation communities, housing is scarce and far below the Canadian standard, and funding for schools and economic development is low. First Nations argue that funding levels should be raised to comply with the spirit of the treaties.

Self-Government

First Nations believe a treaty is binding under international law. As such, it can only be made by an entity with an international legal personality. Because First Nations have signed treaties, they were recognized—and should be recognized today—as sovereign nations.

The self-government issue was brought sharply into focus in 1969 when the government issued its controversial White Paper. It proposed that First Nations receive the same government services, property rights and legal status as other

Canadians. The paper proposed that all treaty claims be settled and that First Nation lands be placed under First Nation control. This would lead to the end of treaties.

Aboriginal leaders reacted quickly and angrily. They believed that in addition to the normal rights and duties of citizenship, they were entitled to certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community.

Treaties, they argued, go on forever because Aboriginal right to land and their sovereignty as a nation are unchanging facts. There is still debate over what that sovereignty means today.

An Office of Native Claims was established within DIAND in 1974 to conduct research, represent the government in claims negotiations with Aboriginal groups and formulate related policies.

Current*Activity*

First Nations Oil and Gas Management Initiative

In Alberta and Saskatchewan, a First Nations Oil and Gas Management Initiative was launched in 1994 by the Canadian Indian Energy Corporation—an organization representing about 100 First Nations in Western Canada and Ontario—and by DIAND. Its objective? To enable five First Nations to manage their oil and gas resources.

Participating First Nations start off by sharing management decision making with the federal government. Gradually, they take on more control until they have sole responsibility.

The White Bear First Nation in Saskatchewan was the first to participate; four Alberta First Nations have since joined (the Horse Lake Siksika and Dene Tha' First Nations, and the Blood Tribe).

Change in Oil and Gas Regulations

In 1995, legislation, called the Indian Oil and Gas Regulations, was introduced. First Nations must now be consulted by industry and government before and during the exploration and development of oil and gas resources on First Nation lands.

Financial Transfer Arrangements

First Nations and the Canadian government are starting to negotiate multi-year financial transfer agreements (FTAs). The old FTAs were restrictive because they had to be renegotiated every year. Now, First Nations manage their funds over a longer term. This allows them to respond to community priorities while providing long-term funding security. There are currently five multi-year FTAs in place in Alberta.

Progress on Claims

Resolving outstanding land claims is a priority for the federal government and First Nations. Resolved claims create a climate of certainty for economic development. Studies show that land claims settlements often spark an economic boom, with spinoffs in neighbouring non-Aboriginal communities.

Twenty specific claims have been concluded in Alberta, eight since 1986. Two of the most recent settlements are with the Blood and Tsuu T'ina First Nations. An additional eight claims are currently being negotiated.

Tallcree Settlement

Although reserve lands were set aside for the Tallcree First Nation in the Fort Vermilion area in 1912 and 1915, it didn't get the full amount of land to which it was entitled. In 1994, a new settlement provided 5,261 more hectares and $7 million.

Alexis Settlement

In 1995, the Alexis First Nation and federal and Alberta officials signed a land claim settlement. They will receive about 8,500 hectares of additional land and $12 million.

Lubicon Talks Continue

Negotiations over the outstanding Lubicon Lake First Nation land claim are ongoing. In 1994, the government appointed an independent federal negotiator, Harold Millican. Negotiations resumed in 1995.

Across Alberta, Aboriginal communities are working with federal and provincial governments to strengthen the social and economic fabric of their communities.

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Community and Economic Development

Across Alberta, Aboriginal communities are working with federal and provincial governments to strengthen the social and economic fabric of their communities.

Community Infrastructure

The First Nations Infrastructure Initiative (FNII) allocated $2 million to Alberta First Nations in 1995 for local projects. A total of 27 have been completed, including road reconstruction, sanitary facility expansions, water and sewer projects, and environmental enhancements. Twenty new FNII projects have been approved.

Social Services

In 1979, the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council took over the administration and advisory functions of child welfare programs. The majority of funding intended for the region's nine First Nations flows through this council. It administers an annual budget of about $25 million.

Devolution of Federal Schools

In 1974, there were more than 40 federal schools in Alberta First Nations communities. Today, only one remains; the rest are administered by First Nations.

Distance Learning

The information revolution of the 1990s has made distance less of a barrier to quality education. The Stony First Nation takes advantage of satellite learning to allow adult students to stay in their home communities. It co-operates with the Alberta Vocational College to offer distance learning in reading, writing, math and science.

SchoolNet

Aboriginal schools in Alberta and the federal government worked on a pilot project to link 22 Aboriginal schools across Canada to the Internet. Within three years, 396 First Nation schools in Canada will be linked, using the SchoolNet program. All the First Nation schools in Alberta were provided with access to the SchoolNet by Industry Canada and Telus, a private company.

Post-Secondary Education Initiatives

In 1994, the first class graduated from Alberta Vocational College's Aboriginal Law Program. In 1995, a new trade school, affiliated with the Southern

Alberta Institute of Technology, opened in the Stony First Nation community. The school focuses on job skills and training, particularly construction courses, but plans to expand to include courses in cooking, tourism and hospitality and convention.

Increased Funding for Post-Secondary Education

First Nations and Inuit are working with the federal government to increase educational opportunities. Over the years, the federal government has steadily increased post-secondary education funding to an annual budget of approximately $284 million. The program assists annually about 27,000 post-secondary students across Canada—over 3,000 in Alberta.

In 1994, the first class graduated from Alberta Vocational College's Aboriginal Law Program.

Dialogue for Change

In 1876, 1877 and 1899, the Government of Canada signed three treaties with the First Nations of what would become Alberta. Negotiations are under way on how to interpret those treaties today.

In 1995, the Government of Canada and the Alberta Summit Chiefs signed an agreement to develop a mechanism to discuss issues, including jurisdiction and authority.

Co-Management

In 1995, Alberta Chiefs were invited to present proposals for co-managing their resources. These include off-reserve natural resources such as wildlife, fish, water, mineral deposits and forests. As many of these fall under provincial jurisdiction, co-management negotiations involve the First Nation and the provincial government, though sometimes the federal government gets involved, as well.

Four co-management proposals have been received so far. One from the Little Red River Cree and one from the Tallcree First Nations have been successful. Besides a co-management plan, it includes several economic development projects.

M121

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List of Alberta First Nations

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
438 Alexander	Algonkian*	Cree
437 Alexis	Siouan	Dakota
463 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation	Athapaskan	Chipewyan**/ Cree
445 Beaver First Nation	Athapaskan	Beaver
460 Beaver Lake	Algonkian	Cree
458 Bigstone Cree Nation	Algonkian	Cree
435 Blood	Algonkian	Blackfoot
470 Chipewyan Prairie First Nation	Algonkian/ Athapaskan	Chipewyan/ Cree
464 Cold Lake First Nation	Athapaskan	Chipewyan/Cree
448 Dene Tha'	Athapaskan	Slave
450 Driftpile First Nation	Algonkian	Cree

Other spelling forms: * Algonkin, Algonquian
** Chippewan, Chippewyan

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
451 Duncan's First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
440 Enoch Cree Nation No. 440	Algonkian	Cree
443 Ermineskin Tribe	Algonkian	Cree
467 Fort McKay First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
468 Fort McMurray #468 First Nation	Athapaskan/ Algonkian	Chipewyan/ Cree
465 Frog Lake	Algonkian	Cree
469 Heart Lake	Athapaskan	Chipewyan/Cree
449 Horse Lake First Nation	Athapaskan	Beaver
452 Kapawe'no First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
466 Kehewin Cree Nation	Algonkian	Cree
447 Little Red River	Algonkian	Cree
476 Loon River Cree	Algonkian	Cree
439 Louis Bull	Algonkian	Cree
453 Lubicon Lake	Algonkian	Cree

List
Alberta First Nations

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
438 Alexander	Algonkian*	Cree
437 Alexis	Siouan	Dakota
463 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation	Athapaskan	Chipewyan**/ Cree
445 Beaver First Nation	Athapaskan	Beaver
460 Beaver Lake	Algonkian	Cree
458 Bigstone Cree Nation	Algonkian	Cree
435 Blood	Algonkian	Blackfoot
470 Chipewyan Prairie First Nation	Algonkian/ Athapaskan	Chipewyan/ Cree
464 Cold Lake First Nation	Athapaskan	Chipewyan/Cree
448 Dene Tha'	Athapaskan	Slave
450 Driftpile First Nation	Algonkian	Cree

Other spelling forms: * Algonkin, Algonquian
** Chippewan, Chippewyan

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
451 Duncan's First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
440 Enoch Cree Nation No. 440	Algonkian	Cree
443 Ermineskin Tribe	Algonkian	Cree
467 Fort McKay First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
468 Fort McMurray #468 First Nation	Athapaskan/ Algonkian	Chipewyan/ Cree
465 Frog Lake	Algonkian	Cree
469 Heart Lake	Athapaskan	Chipewyan/Cree
449 Horse Lake First Nation	Athapaskan	Beaver
452 Kapawe'no First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
466 Kehewin Cree Nation	Algonkian	Cree
447 Little Red River	Algonkian	Cree
476 Loon River Cree	Algonkian	Cree
439 Louis Bull	Algonkian	Cree
453 Lubicon Lake	Algonkian	Cree

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
472 Michel (Former)	Algonkian	Cree
461 Mikisew Cree First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
442 Montana	Algonkian	Cree
431 O'Chiese	Algonkian	Ojibwa
441 Paul	Algonkian/Siouan	Dakota/Cree
436 Peigan Nation	Algonkian	Blackfoot
462 Saddle Lake	Algonkian	Cree
444 Samson	Algonkian	Cree
454 Sawridge	Algonkian	Cree
430 Siksika	Algonkian	Blackfoot
473 Stoney Bearspaw	Siouan	Dakota
433 Stoney (Chiniki)	Siouan	Dakota
475 Stoney (Wesley) (Goodstoney)	Siouan	Dakota
455 Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation	Algonkian	Cree

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
456 Sucker Creek	Algonkian	Cree
434 Sunchild First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
457 Swan River First Nation	Algonkian	Cree
446 Tallcree	Algonkian	Cree
432 Tsuu T'ina Nation	Athapaskan	Sarcee
459 Whitefish Lake	Algonkian	Cree
474 Woodland Cree First Nation	Algonkian	Cree

NOTE: The Ojibway Indians are also known as "Saulteaux." (Assiniboine dialect—the Assiniboine are commonly referred to in Alberta as "Stony.")

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